

UNDERSTANDING POST-COVID PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH EFFECTS: A SURVEY-BASED STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The long-term effects of COVID-19, often referred to as **Long COVID** or **Post-COVID conditions**, have raised significant global health concerns. Many individuals experience persistent physical and mental health challenges even after recovering from the acute phase of the infection. This study aims to assess the prevalence and severity of post-COVID symptoms, their impact on daily life, and the correlation between physical and mental health consequences. A cross-sectional survey was conducted to gather data from individuals who have recovered from COVID-19. The findings highlight common post-COVID symptoms, such as fatigue, respiratory distress, cognitive impairment, anxiety, and depression.

Keywords: : Post-COVID, Physical and mental health impact, long run post-COVID health effects, Epidemiological study.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has left a lasting impact on global health, not only in terms of acute infections but also in the form of **long-term health conse-**

quences that persist well beyond the initial recovery phase. These lingering effects, commonly referred to as **Long COVID** or **Post-COVID conditions**, have

affected millions worldwide, often disrupting daily life and overall well-being. While some individuals recover fully within weeks, others continue to experience a **wide range of physical and mental health symptoms for months or even years** after their initial infection.

Physical Health Effects of Long COVID

Post-COVID physical health complications vary widely among individuals, with some of the most commonly reported symptoms including:

- **Chronic fatigue:** Many individuals experience extreme exhaustion, affecting their ability to work or engage in routine activities.
- **Breathing difficulties:** Shortness of breath, chest tightness, and decreased lung capacity are frequent complaints, even in those who had mild COVID-19.
- **Cardiovascular issues:** Heart palpitations, irregular heartbeat, have been observed in many post-COVID patients.
- **Muscle and joint pain:** Lingering pain, stiffness, and inflammation in joints and muscles make physical movement challenging.
- **Neurological symptoms:** Individuals report frequent headaches, dizziness, numbness, tingling sensations, and an overall decline in cognitive function.
- **Weakened immune response:** Some individuals experience increased susceptibility to infections and delayed recovery from minor illnesses.

Mental Health and Cognitive Effects

Beyond physical symptoms, **mental health challenges** associated with Long COVID are equally concerning. The post-viral impact on brain function and emotional well-being has been reported widely, including:

- **Brain fog:** Many individuals experience difficulty with memory, concentration, and problem-solving, leading to challenges in both professional and personal life.
- **Anxiety and depression:** A significant number of post-COVID individuals report heightened anxiety, persistent sadness, mood swings, and feelings of isolation.

- **Sleep disturbances:** Insomnia, frequent awakenings, and poor sleep quality are common issues that exacerbate fatigue and cognitive dysfunction.
- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** Some individuals, especially those who had severe COVID-19 or required hospitalization, experience PTSD-like symptoms, including nightmares, intrusive thoughts, and emotional distress.
- **Loss of motivation and energy:** A general sense of apathy, reduced interest in social interactions, and difficulty returning to daily routines have been widely observed.

Despite increasing awareness of Long COVID, there is still limited research on its prevalence, severity, and long-term impact. This study aims to assess the physical and mental health effects experienced by individual post-COVID, identify common symptoms, and evaluate their impact on daily functioning. By gathering insights through a structured survey, this research seeks to contribute to a better understanding of post-COVID conditions.

AIM:

This study aims to **examine the prevalence and severity of post-COVID symptoms, both physical and mental, and assess their impact on daily functioning**. By collecting data through a structured survey, the research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of Long COVID.

Materials And Methods:

Study Design

A **cross-sectional survey** was conducted using an online questionnaire to assess the physical and mental health effects of COVID-19. The study targeted individuals who had previously tested positive for COVID-19 and had recovered from the acute phase of the illness.

Participants and Sampling

The survey was conducted using Google Forms and distributed through social media platforms, and email networks. Inclusion criteria required that participants:

- Had a **confirmed** COVID-19 diagnosis (self-reported or medically documented).

- Had **recovered** from the acute phase but continued experiencing or had previously experienced post-COVID symptoms.

Data Collection

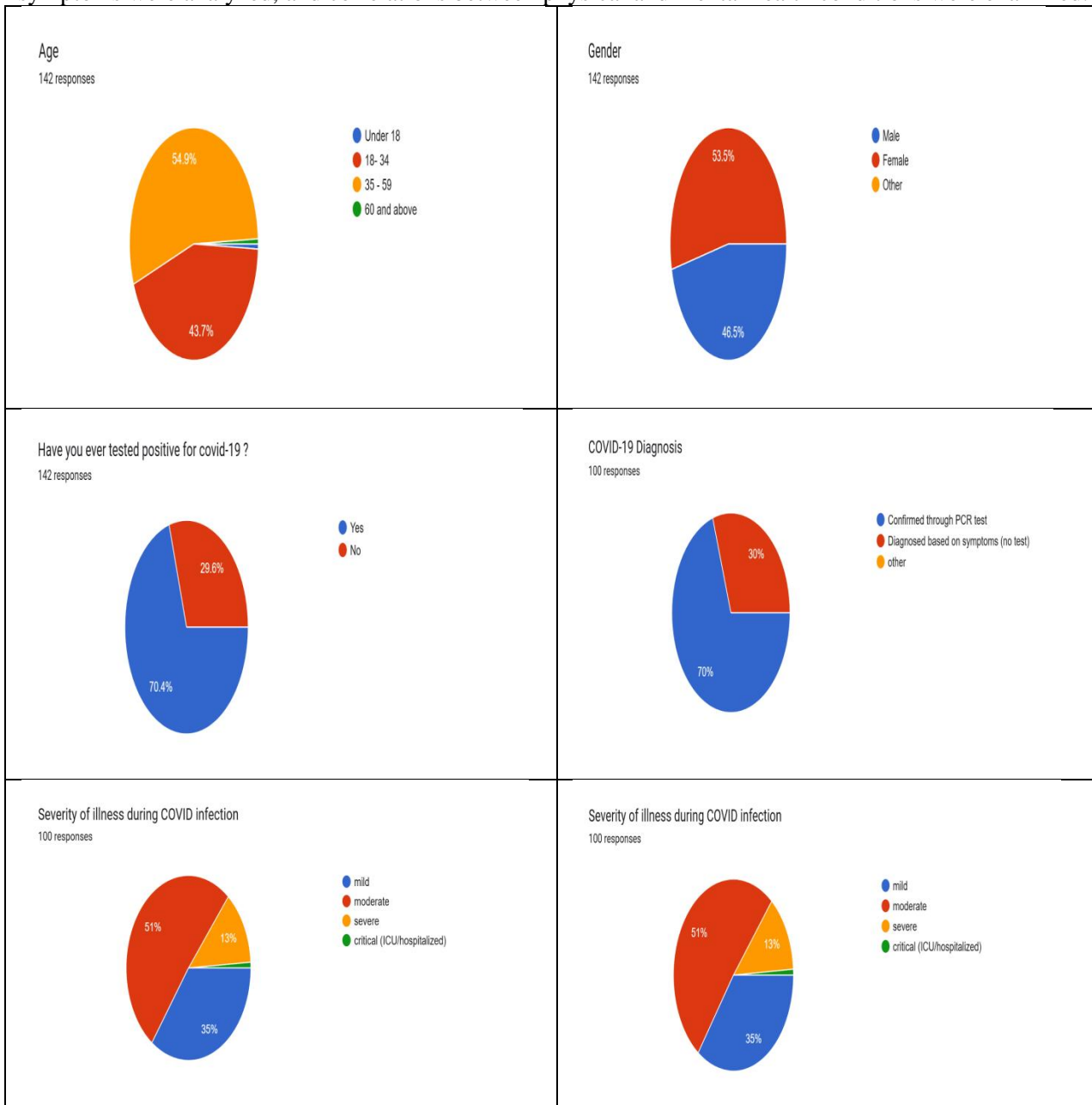
The questionnaire included **four key sections**:

1. **Demographics:** Age, gender, occupation and medical history.

2. **Physical Health Symptoms:** Fatigue, respiratory issues, cardiovascular symptoms, joint pain, headaches, and neurological symptoms.
3. **Mental Health Symptoms:** Anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, brain fog, stress, panic attacks and post-traumatic stress disorder.
4. **Impact on Daily Life:** Ability to work, engage in social activities, and perform routine tasks.

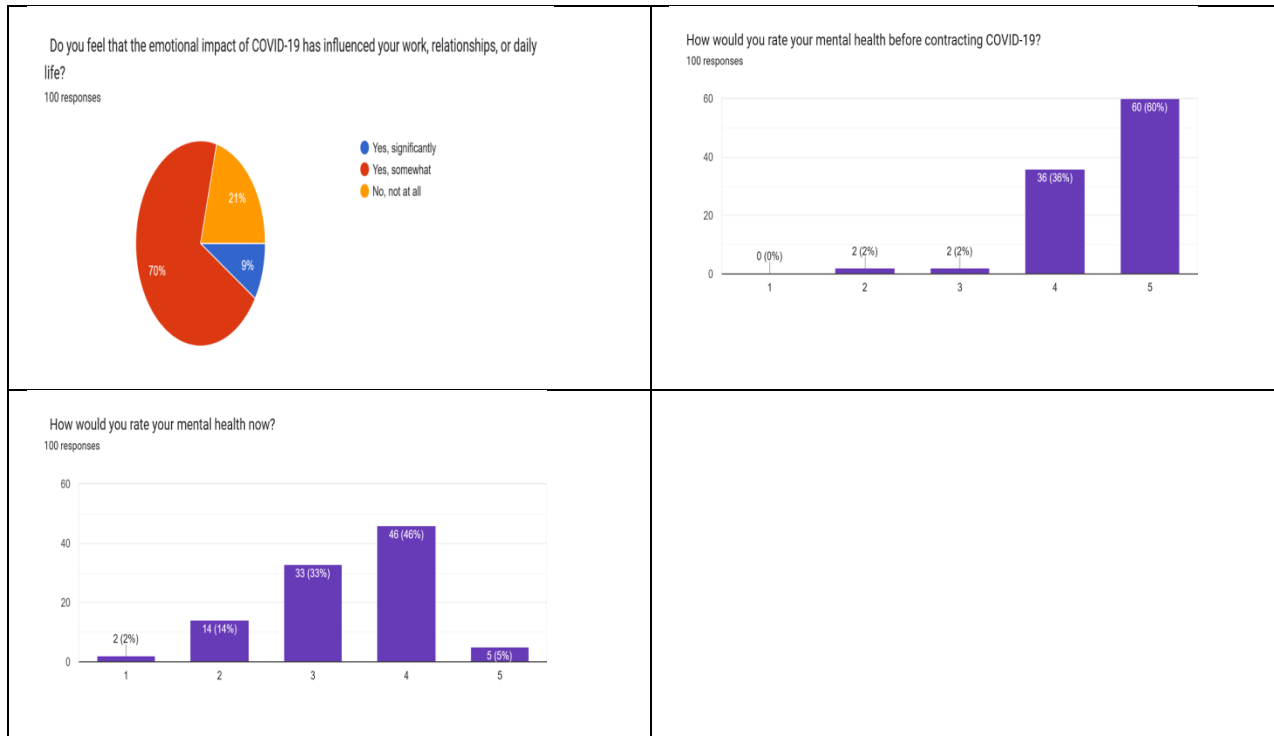
Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize participant responses. The frequency and severity of post-COVID symptoms were analyzed, and correlations between physical and mental health conditions were examined.









Results:

Participant Demographics:

A total of 100 participants completed the survey, with an age range of 18 to 65+ years. Among them, 46.5% were male, 53.5% were female. The majority had moderate COVID-19 cases with 51%, 35% having mild blood, 13% with severe infection and with 1% in critical condition requiring hospitalization during their infection.

Prevalence of Physical Health Symptoms:

The most commonly reported post-COVID physical symptoms included:

- Fatigue (72%)
- Shortness of breath (31%)
- Joint/muscle pain (43%)
- Chest pain or discomfort (15%)

Prevalence of Mental Health Symptoms:

Participants also reported significant mental health challenges post-recovery:

- Stress (81%)
- Anxiety (48%)
- post-traumatic stress disorder (16%)
- Depression (7%)
- Panic attacks (6%)

Impact on Daily Life:

- 71% of participants reported reduced activity due to lingering symptoms.
- 8% expressed they are unable to return to pre-COVID-19 physical activity levels.
- 21% stated that post-COVID effects had no effect on their day-to-day life.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the persistent physical and mental health challenges faced by individuals recovering from COVID-19. Fatigue, respiratory distress, cognitive dysfunction, anxiety, and depression were among the most commonly reported symptoms, significantly impacting daily life. The results may underscore the importance of comprehensive post-COVID healthcare interventions, including multidisciplinary treatment, rehabilitation programs, and mental health support. Future research may focus on long-term symptom progression and effective management strategies to support individuals experiencing Long COVID.

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